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NASA Procedural Requirements

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Subject: NASA Career Transition Assistance Plan

Responsible Office: Office of Human Capital Management

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Chapter 1. NASA Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP) Special Selection Priority

1.1 Introduction

Federal agencies are required to establish CTAPs to assist their surplus and displaced employees affected by downsizing and restructuring. Such plans include programs to assist employees in transitioning to other employment and policies to provide special selection priority to well-qualified surplus and displaced employees who apply for Agency vacancies in the local commuting area. This NPR constitutes NASA's CTAP. This chapter of the NPR provides NASA's policies for special selection priority under CTAP, as prescribed in 5 CFR 330 Subpart F.

1.2 Responsibility

1.2.1 The Assistant Administrator for Human Capital Management has overall responsibility for ensuring Agency compliance with the regulations, policies, and procedures governing special selection priority for NASA surplus and displaced employees.

1.2.2 Center Human Resources Directors shall:

- a. Ensure that selection practices for filling all competitive service vacancies comply with the requirements to give special selection priority to any CTAP eligibles.
- b. Provide each eligible employee with written information about CTAP assistance and special selection priority at the time the Center issues a specific reduction in force (RIF) separation notice, certificate of expected separation, or other official certification that identifies an employee as likely to be separated by RIF, or removed under adverse action procedures for declining a directed reassignment or a transfer of function outside the local commuting area.
- c. Conduct a specific orientation session for surplus and displaced Center employees on the eligibility requirements for special selection priority under CTAP, including how to apply for vacancies under CTAP.
- d. Ensure that employees eligible for CTAP special selection priority are notified of vacancies in the local commuting area and understand the requirements to be determined well-qualified for the vacancies.
- e. Ensure that Center vacancy announcements contain information on how CTAP-eligible employees can apply, required proof of eligibility, and the requirements for being determined well-qualified for the vacancies.
- f. Advise CTAP eligibles in writing of the results of their applications and the results of an independent second review for applicants identified as not well-qualified for a vacancy for which they apply.

1.2.3. Employees are responsible for:

- a. Requesting CTAP selection priority by applying for specific NASA vacancies in the local commuting area in which they are interested and answering the applicable question in NASA STARS indicating their eligibility for CTAP.
- b. Providing proof of CTAP eligibility when notified of tentative selection under an announcement for which they indicated CTAP eligibility.

1.3 Coverage

The policies in this chapter apply to all surplus and displaced NASA civilian employees affected by downsizing and restructuring, as defined in paragraph 1.4, who would otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for CTAP placement assistance as described in paragraph 1.6.

1.4 Definitions

1.4.1 A displaced employee is a NASA employee who is:

- a. A current career or career-conditional competitive service employee in tenure group I or II, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who has received a specific RIF separation notice or a notice of proposed removal for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside the local commuting area.
- b. A current employee in the excepted service, serving on an appointment without time limit, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who has been given noncompetitive appointment eligibility and selection priority by statute for positions in the competitive service, and who is in receipt of a RIF separation notice or notice of proposed removal for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside the local commuting area.
- c. A current employee serving on a Schedule A or B excepted appointment without time limit, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, and who has received a RIF notice of separation or a notice of proposed removal for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside the local commuting area. Schedule A or B employees may exercise selection priority for permanent excepted service NASA positions within the local commuting area, provided the position to which appointed has the same appointing authority, i.e., Schedule A or B, as the position from which being separated.

1.4.2 A surplus employee is:

- a. A current employee serving under an appointment in the competitive service, in tenure group I or II, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who has received a certificate of expected separation or other official certification issued by NASA indicating that the employee's position is surplus.
- b. A current employee serving on an excepted service appointment without time limit, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, who has been issued a certificate of expected separation or other official certification indicating that the employee's position is surplus, and who has been conferred noncompetitive appointment eligibility and special selection priority by statute for positions in the competitive service.
- c. A current employee serving on a Schedule A or B excepted appointment without time limit, at grade levels GS-15 or equivalent and below, and who is in receipt of a certificate of expected separation or other official certification indicating that the employee's job is surplus. Schedule A or B employees may exercise selection priority for permanent excepted service NASA positions within the local commuting area, provided the position to which appointed has the same appointing authority, i.e., Schedule A or B, as the position from which being separated.

1.4.3 A well-qualified employee for purposes of CTAP eligibility must possess knowledge, skills, and abilities which exceed the minimum qualification requirements for the position and meet all other requirements identified in 5 CFR 330.604(k). Qualified candidates will be assigned to one of three quality levels based on the degree to which their competencies meet the duties required. For the purpose of CTAP, candidates rated in the top quality level are considered well-qualified. In instances in which all minimally eligible candidates are referred (e.g., under the Distinguished Scholar authority), then CTAP eligibles who are minimally eligible have selection priority over other candidates.

1.4.4 Local commuting area is defined in 5 CFR 330.604(e). NASA Headquarters and Goddard Space Flight Center are considered to be in the same local commuting area. The NASA Shared Services Center and Stennis Space Center are in the same local commuting area. All other Centers and facilities are in their own separate commuting areas.

1.5 Special Selection Priority: Eligibility

1.5.1 A surplus or displaced employee who is still on NASA's rolls is eligible for CTAP special selection priority if the following conditions are met:

- a. Has a current performance rating of record of at least fully successful or equivalent.
- b. Applies for a NASA vacancy that is at or below the employee's current grade level (and with no greater promotion potential).
- c. Occupies a position in the same local commuting area of the vacancy.
- d. Files an application for a specific vacancy within the timeframes established by the vacancy announcement and

provides the appropriate proof of CTAP eligibility (e.g., RIF separation notice, certificate of expected separation, notice of proposed removal) in accordance with the announcement's instructions.

e. Is determined to be well-qualified for the vacancy.

1.5.2 Employees are eligible for CTAP special selection priority on the date they are issued the RIF separation notice, a notice of proposed separation for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside the local commuting area, or a certificate of expected separation (or other official certification) stating that the employee's position is surplus.

1.5.3 Eligibility for special selection priority expires on the earliest of:

a. The RIF separation date, the date of the employee's resignation, retirement, or separation from the Agency (including separation under adverse action procedures for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function or similar relocation to another local commuting area).

b. Cancellation of the RIF separation notice, certificate of expected separation, notice of proposed removal for declining a directed reassignment or transfer of function outside the commuting area, or other official Agency certification identifying the employee as surplus.

c. Effective date of the employee's career, career-conditional, or excepted appointment without time limit (subsequent to the displacement leading to the CTAP eligibility) in any agency at any grade level.

d. The date of declination of a career, career conditional, or excepted appointment without time limit within NASA, for which the employee has applied and been rated well-qualified. Declination of a temporary or term position does not affect the employee's selection priority for permanent positions.

1.6 Special Selection Priority: Operation

1.6.1 Except as indicated in paragraph 1.7, whenever a Center is filling a competitive service vacancy for a total of 121 days or more (including extensions), it must select a NASA CTAP eligible in the local commuting area who is well-qualified for the position before selecting any other candidate unless another employee would otherwise be separated by a RIF.

1.6.2 If a Center makes an initial determination that a CTAP applicant is not well-qualified for the vacancy, it must conduct an independent second review of the qualifications determination before referral lists are issued. The independent second review must be conducted by an HR specialist or subject-matter expert who did not make the initial determination. Upon completion of the independent second review, the applicant must be advised in writing of the results of the review.

1.6.3 If there are multiple well-qualified CTAP eligibles, the selecting official may select any one of them for the vacancy.

1.6.4 If displaced or surplus candidates do not meet the definition of well-qualified as defined in paragraph 1.4.3, they will be considered under normal rating and ranking procedures with other qualified candidates.

1.7 Exceptions to Special Selection Priority

Actions that are not subject to CTAP special selection priority are identified in 5 CFR 330.606(d).

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